



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

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News Release

Singapore man arrested in plot to export arms to Syria and Indonesia

SAN DIEGO – A Singapore national was arrested Monday by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) agents in San Diego for attempting to export fully automatic machine guns to individuals in Indonesia in violation of the Arms Export Control Act.

Chia Kia Cheng, aka Ronald “KC” Chia, 60, appeared in U.S. District Court this morning charged with two felony counts of “knowingly attempting to illegally export defense articles...without having obtained a license or written authorization for such export from the Department of State.” By law, anyone attempting to export U.S. defense articles must register with the State Department and obtain a license or official government approval.

As part of a multi-year international investigation, an undercover ICE agent met Cheng in a San Diego hotel Monday afternoon to negotiate the details of an arms deal, with Cheng ultimately paying the agents \$3,280 in U.S. currency to cover the cost of three fully automatic rifles, a scope, and shipping expenses to Indonesia -- where the guns would be test fired prior to the negotiated purchase of a large quantity of weapons that would be destined for both Indonesia and Syria.

Court documents allege that in 1999, ICE agents working undercover were introduced to Cheng at a trade show in Washington D.C. Subsequently ICE launched an investigation into Cheng’s possible involvement in acquiring military and security equipment.

In March 2005, Cheng inquired about the potential purchase and export of M-16 rifles. Through



e-mail exchanges and telephone calls, an ICE agent and Cheng finalized a deal for several automatic rifles and a scope to be forwarded to individuals in Indonesia and Syria. During the hotel meeting, Cheng completed a blank international shipping form designating shipment of the weapons to Jakarta, Indonesia, at which point he was taken into custody.

“In the wrong hands, arms and sensitive technology pose a serious threat to national security,” said Mike Unzueta, special agent in charge for ICE investigations in San Diego. “This case demonstrates that those who jeopardize the security of our nation for personal profit will be held accountable.”

“The illegal transfer of Department of Defense weapons and technology is one of the top investigative priorities of DCIS,” said Rick Gwin, special agent in charge for the DCIS Western Field Office. “In the hands of America’s enemies the type of weapons sought by Mr. Cheng pose a serious threat to America’s Warfighter. DCIS will aggressively pursue those who seek to illegally buy and sell Dept. of Defense technology.”

The weapons that Cheng intended to illegally export included the M4 Carbine and the M4 Commando rifles, which are fully automatic 5.56 mm Colt-manufactured rifles. Both are listed on the Department of State’s munitions list.

If convicted, Cheng faces 10 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine for each count charged against him.

ICE